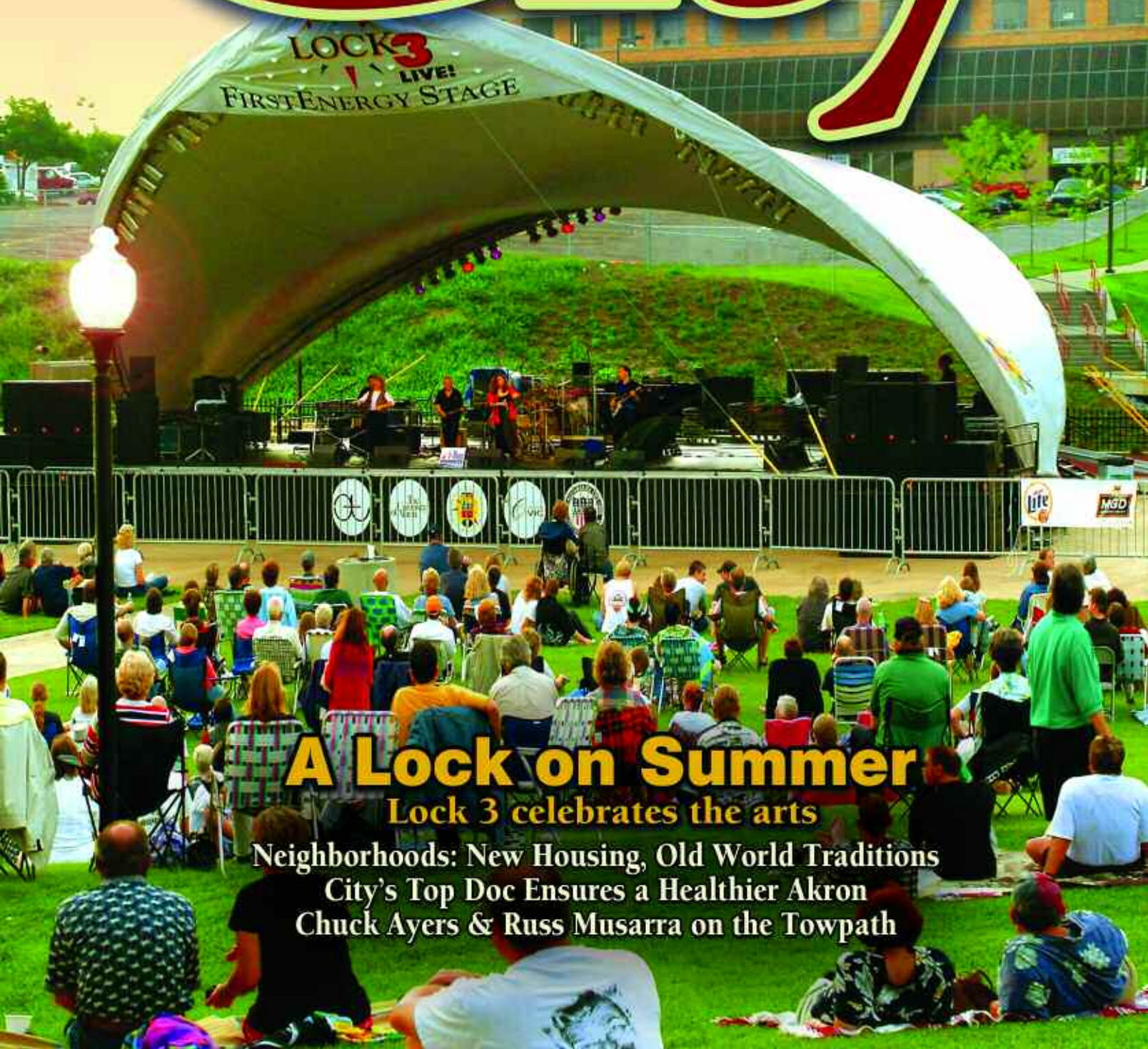


# Akron City

September-December 2003



## A Lock on Summer

Lock 3 celebrates the arts

Neighborhoods: New Housing, Old World Traditions

City's Top Doc Ensures a Healthier Akron

Chuck Ayers & Russ Musarra on the Towpath



## From City Hall... A 'Got Well' Card



I take every opportunity I can get to extol Akron's virtues to business leaders in the United States, Europe, and Asia. Along with the Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce, I've often boasted to outsiders of the assets that make this region a great place to do business.

But you get an entirely different view of why Akron is a great place to live when you're flat on your back in an operating room.

It was an experience I hadn't expected this summer, but it's one that I'm now intensely grateful for. It gave me a whole new appreciation for Akron's superior health care system.

To the physicians, nurses, and technicians who got me through open-heart surgery at Akron General Medical Center, I send my personal thanks. More importantly, my hospital stay made me realize how the people who work in Akron's health care industry affect all of us. Care here is second to none.

And that's not just the mayor bragging.



*Children's*  
Hospital Medical Center of Akron

With more than 64,000 emergency room visits logged last year, Akron Children's Hospital is one of the busiest facilities of its kind in the country. The 2,727 employees of Akron Children's and its subsidiaries are responsible for its designation by *Child*

magazine as one of the top hospitals in the country. In fact, ours is one of three children's hospitals nationwide to be selected by the March of Dimes to conduct research on families who need neonatal intensive care. And Akron Children's is one of a handful nationwide to be verified three times in a row as a "Burn Trauma Center" by the American College of Surgeons.



More than 500,000 residents of Greater Akron use the hospitals of Summa Health System each year. As the city's largest employer, with 6,036 employees, Summa has achieved the coveted ranking as "One of America's Best Hospitals," by *U.S. News and World Report* magazine six years in a row. Summa ranked in the top 50 in 11 medical specialties, 17th in the nation in "heart." Its homegrown insurance provider, Summacare, consistently earns the highest rankings from national rating companies.



**AKRON GENERAL  
HEALTH SYSTEM**

It is remarkable that of 6,000 hospitals nationwide, *U.S. News* rates only 168 as superior—and Akron has two of them.

This year, *U.S. News* ranked Akron General Medical Center among the top 50 in five medical specialties. Cited as one of the "100 Most Wired Hospitals in the Country," it is a national leader in its use of computer technology.

Adding in the 4,959 employees at Akron General, our local health systems account for almost 14,000 jobs in the city.

Among American cities, we are also fortunate in one other way: Each of our hospitals is still run by local boards of trustees—your neighbors and mine.

I'm especially proud of the fact that our three hospitals have collaborated with Akron's Health Department in reaching out and providing health care to underserved neighborhoods.

Again, let me thank the physicians, nurses, technicians, and workers in Akron's health care industry. Because of these healers, all of us enjoy a higher quality of life.

*Donald L. Phlegan*





**Akron City** is produced three times a year by the City of Akron Communications Department. The magazine and recycling calendar is distributed by U.S. mail to all residents of Akron by Keep Akron Beautiful, a not-for-profit corporation in the state of Ohio.

Additional copies of the magazine and recycling calendar are available through the Department of Communications, Mayor's Office, 166 South High Street, Akron, OH 44308.

#### Our Cover Photo...

... is **Bruce Ford's** view of Akron's newly-opened Lock 3 Park, which will host Canal Walk weekend August 30-31. Since Memorial Day weekend, downtown's new entertainment venue has attracted an average of 2,000 visitors weekly for concerts at Thursday's lunch hour and on Friday and Saturday evenings, plus a farmers' market on Saturday mornings.

**Tell us what you think** by replying to [editor@ci.akron.oh.us](mailto:editor@ci.akron.oh.us)  
Or share your thoughts with the mayor at [mayor@ci.akron.oh.us](mailto:mayor@ci.akron.oh.us)

Published by the City of Akron Department of Communications, Mark Williamson, director.

Distributed by Keep Akron Beautiful, a not-for-profit corporation, Paula Davis, director.

Publication services provided by Live Publishing Company.

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# Neighborhoods

## Lane-Wooster



**CITY VIEW** After nearly three years of property acquisition and site preparation, the City of Akron has created a new neighborhood on the near west side. The first phase of the City View development, the result of a collaboration between the City of Akron and the Homebuilders Association serving Summit and Portage County, consists of 18 homes simultaneously built in an existing neighborhood by nine different HBA member builders. The City of Akron spent nearly \$2 million acquiring and clearing the land over the past several years, removing the substandard homes and reconfiguring the lots to meet current City standards. The new homes, located along Bisson Avenue, City View Avenue and East Avenue (just north of Vernon Odom Boulevard) range in price from \$100,00 to \$140,000 and command beautiful views of the downtown Akron skyline to the east. The project is just part of the City's larger Neighborhood Development Area rehabilitation program for the surrounding area that includes street improvements and technical and financial assistance to homeowners to improve their properties. The City is in the process of preparing more lots in the same area for more new homes. [C](#)



Ward 3 Councilman Marco Sommerville (right) congratulates new homebuyers Gary and Bernetha Wheeler on their being among the first to move in to the new City View allotment. At left is Steve Conant, president of the Home Builders Association, which sponsored its Parade of Homes at the site in June.

## New Housing Starts: Sparking Akron Neighborhoods



Jerry Egan (left), comprehensive planning administrator, and Ralph Coletta, site improvement administrator, coordinated acquisition of property, demolition, and design of Akron's new housing sites. Pictured at Mt. Zion Terrace.

## Ellet



**VILLAGE AT CEDAR CREEK** Testa Companies have constructed 32 single-family, craftsman-style homes on the five-acre parcel purchased by Testa from the City. The homes, which average roughly 1,700 feet, range in price from \$139,400 to \$164,400. New trails built through Hyre Park make these new homes especially desirable. In 1999, the City of Akron began planning new housing construction on a five-acre lot located west of Canton Road in Ellet in southeast Akron. Now, the new Village at Cedar Creek development has been completed. [C](#)

## Elizabeth Park Valley



**ZION TERRACE** is an attractive three-story, 40-unit apartment complex on a ridge overlooking Cuyahoga Street, just north of downtown, for low- and moderate-income senior citizens. The East Akron Neighborhood Development Corporation developed the \$4.1 million apartment complex using low income housing tax credits. They combined that with \$300,000 in Federal funds directed toward the project by the City of Akron. Each apartment occupies 800 square feet and contains a living room, dining area, bedroom and kitchen with a dishwasher, stove and refrigerator. A garden area for residents is located outside. [C](#)

# The customer is king at Varca's, a store that stocks family values

By Robert Sberna



From left to right, Rick, Augie and Jim Varca.

**D**espite ever-increasing competition from home improvement megastores, the proprietors of Varca's Hardware know they have an edge over the big boys.

"We truly care about our customers' needs," says Rick Varca. "We don't have the buying power of stores like Home Depot, but I've always been confident that good customer service is just as important as price."

Varca's Hardware, on South Arlington Street, is one of only two independent hardware stores remaining in Akron. The other independent, West Hill Hardware, is a Highland Square fixture. Just 20 years ago, 20 independent hardware stores operated in the city.


Rick and his brother Jim often greet customers by their first names. "There's a lot of loyalty among the people that have been coming here for years," Rick says.

Varca's Hardware was established in 1948 by Frank and Theresa Varca, immigrants from Calabria, Italy. The Varcas passed the

business to their sons Augie and Pat. Nowadays, Rick and Jim are day-to-day managers, although Augie, 83, still makes regular appearances at the store.

Within the 1,500 square feet of Varca's Hardware, the tall racks are stocked with a dizzying array of hardware and household items. "We've always been cramped for space, but our customers say we have just about everything they need," says Rick, noting that the store specializes in assorted hard-to-find items.

While he acknowledges the competitive pricing of national chains such as Home Depot and Lowe's, Rick refutes the common perception that prices are across-the-board higher at mom-and-pop businesses. "We try to keep our prices competitive, even if it means less profit for us," he says.

"Our customers occasionally tell us that they've shopped at the big stores. But they usually come back to us," Rick says. "They know that if they're not sure what they need, we're going to take the time to help them figure it out." 



New Era's Mary, Lucija, Rade, and Milos Lekic.

## Eatery Gives East Akron A Taste of the Old World

By Robert Sberna

New Era Restaurant reflects the sturdy, no-frills character of the surrounding East Akron neighborhood.


While the tire-manufacturing jobs have disappeared, the neighborhood has persevered—thanks, in large part, to stalwart residents and businesses such as New Era.

For more than 70 years, New Era has prepared traditional Eastern European-style dishes for its customers. Owners Mitch and Mary Lekic don't use microwave ovens and don't accept credit cards.

"Good food and good service is what we have to offer," says Mitch, a native of Serbia. All menu items, including stuffed peppers, goulash, strudel, and chicken paprikash (the restaurant's signature dish), are made from scratch.

The restaurant was founded by Mary's aunt, Lucille Juric. In the early 1900s, Yugoslavian-born Juric came to East Akron with scores of other Eastern Europeans seeking jobs.

Mary, who can recall working at New Era as a 5 year old, met and married Mitch after he immigrated to the area in the late 1970s. The couple purchased New Era several years later. Now, their four children work at the restaurant. And Mary's 75-year-old mother, Lucija Strebeck, arrives at 5 a.m. each day to help with cooking duties.

The orange Naugahyde upholstery and the glass block windows are a part of the New Era's lore. Still, the Lekics plan to replace the restaurant with a larger facility constructed on the existing site. They hope to open the doors next spring. 



# Always On Call

## Public health care marked by a post-9/11 perspective

By Robert Sberna

**D**r. J. Michael Moser is the prototype of the public health official in post-Sept. 11 America.

Before taking on his current duties as director of the Akron Department of Public Health in June, the Cincinnati-born physician served as director of health for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

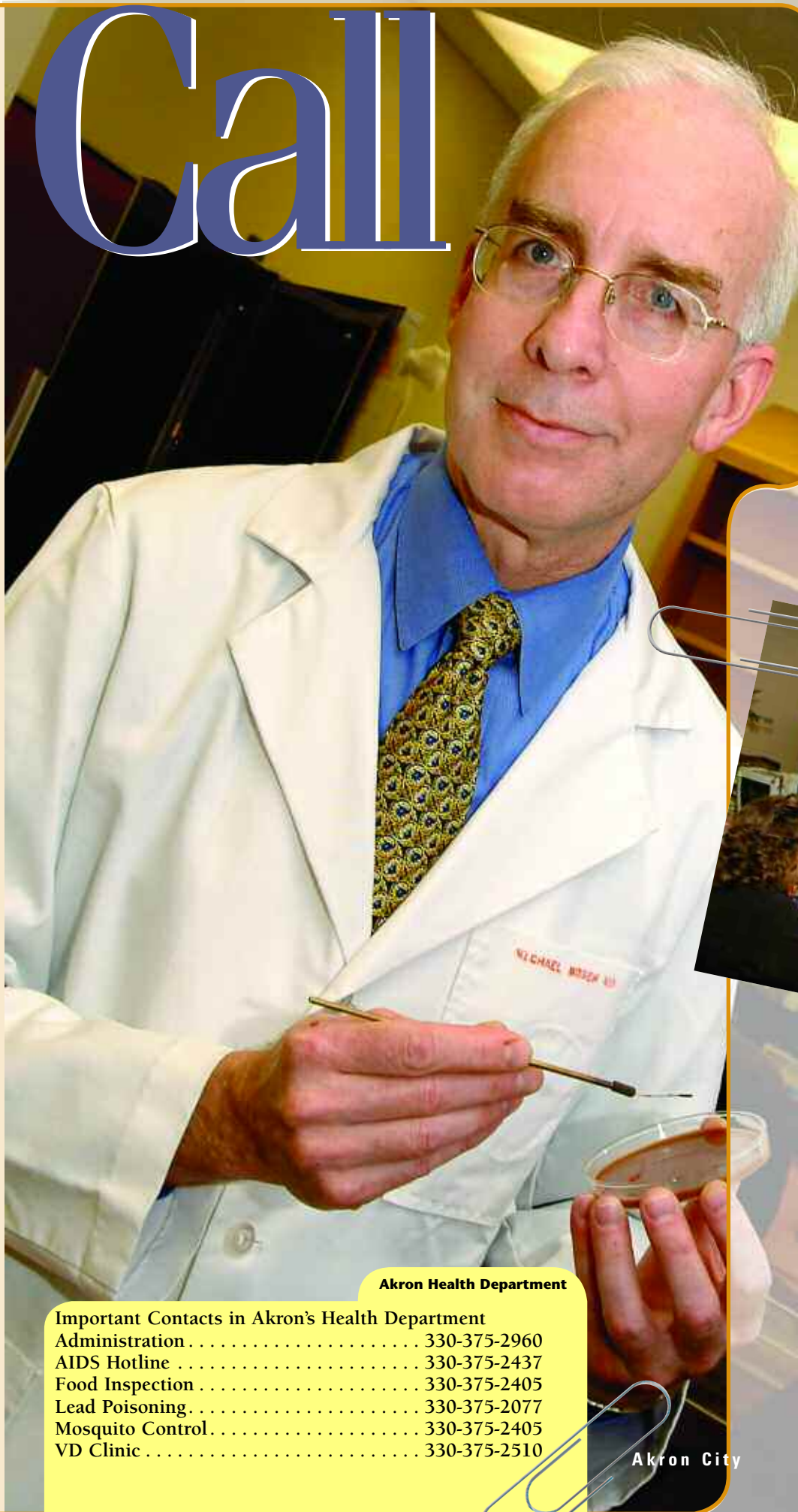
And it was in Kansas that the 56-year-old Moser earned a reputation for meeting the threat of bioterrorism head-on. He was cited as a key player in setting up the system to administer smallpox vaccinations to Kansas' health care professionals.

As his predecessor in Akron, Dr. C. William Keck, has told the media, Dr. Moser's experience can match the challenges in the arena of public health care in Akron.

While the functions of the department have evolved over the years, the mission essentially remains the same: to ensure healthy living conditions throughout the community. And over time, the definition of community has broadened for public health care providers, according to Dr. Moser.

To foster awareness of health issues, the health department works closely with its local, state, and federal counterparts as well as governmental organizations and private health care providers, including hospitals and practitioners. Dr. Moser says that such professional interaction has been a hallmark of the department.

"One of the exceptional characteristics of the previous leadership is the long and successful history of collaboration across [geographical] borders," notes Dr. Moser, who has worked at several different teaching institutions and health departments, includ-



### Akron Health Department

#### Important Contacts in Akron's Health Department

Administration . . . . .	330-375-2960
AIDS Hotline . . . . .	330-375-2437
Food Inspection . . . . .	330-375-2405
Lead Poisoning . . . . .	330-375-2077
Mosquito Control . . . . .	330-375-2405
VD Clinic . . . . .	330-375-2510

Akron City

ing the Ohio Department of Health and The Ohio State University School of Medicine.

"The leadership realized a long time ago that they wouldn't be doing an optimal job if they stopped at the city's borders," he adds. "The fact is that Summit County has an influence on the people of Akron and vice versa."

Dr. Moser's own commitment will be just that widespread. In addition to serving as director of Akron's public health department, he will hold a part-time post with the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine (NEOUCOM) in the division of community health sciences. The Akron health department is a public health practice teaching site for NEOUCOM.

"Because we provide a lot of indirect health services, many people aren't familiar with the extent of our role," explains Chris Partis, public information officer for the Department of Public Health. "A lot of people know of us only as the department that

department's role throughout the early 20th century was the prevention and treatment of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, polio, and influenza.

Preventing the spread of recently identified diseases such as West Nile virus and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) is still a key public health objective. But the department's responsibilities now include a growing spectrum of functions. These days, the 200-member health department is involved in monitoring air quality, inspecting food service establishments, coordinating emergency dental treatment, and providing laboratory services to other public health authorities.

As disease-prevention authorities, public health officials concentrate a great deal of energy on the surveillance of sexually transmitted diseases, such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, and HIV/AIDS, says Partis, who serves as the health department's AIDS programs coordinator.

Acknowledging that the media and the general public often focus on the "disease of the month," Partis points out that "over time people may not hear as much about AIDS and other diseases, so they make assumptions that they are no longer a problem. But the transmission of AIDS and other STDs is still a serious problem."

Dr. Moser and the department of public health serve under the Akron Health Commission.

Because of the department's well-recognized capabilities, staff members are often called on to provide services to neighboring communities.

"We perform a variety of lab tests for other cities that don't have health

departments as large or as diverse as ours," says Partis, explaining that lab tests may include examinations of suspected STD samples and testing for the presence of household lead content.

The department is also the recipient of several grant-funded programs that enable health professionals to provide services throughout Summit County, and in Portage and Medina counties. Some of the regionalized services are AIDS case management and an air quality program that is funded

by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.


Along with its work with other public health organizations, Akron's health department interacts closely with area health care providers. "Part of our job is to look at lab tests that have been ordered through hospitals and physicians," says Dr. Marguerite Erme, the department's disease control medical officer. "We look at the total numbers of tests and also the number of positive tests."

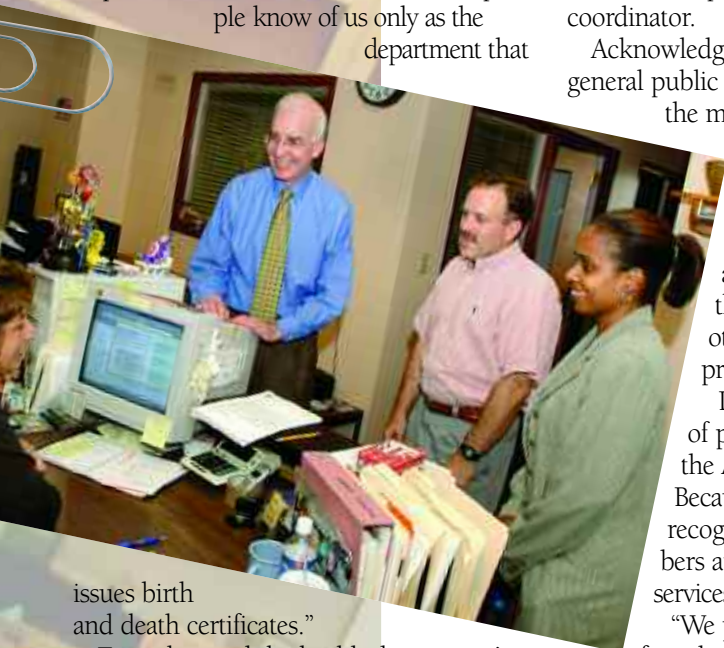
By tracking the reported cases of communicable diseases, says Dr. Erme, "We know what's going on in the community. We want to know what is happening before it becomes a big problem."

Dr. Erme, who is responsible for communicable disease surveillance, investigation, and control, says her department tracks a range of diseases, including viral meningitis, influenza, SARS, and STDs. "We receive notification of communicable diseases and then follow up on the reports," she says. "We provide lots of education to make sure that [infected] people understand what they came down with." She adds that department members also attempt to learn if the infected person may have transmitted the disease to someone else.

At present, certain STDs such as chlamydia and gonorrhea are the most frequently reported diseases in this area. "STDs are a big problem to try to control because it requires a behavioral change, rather than just giving people a vaccine or pill as a preventative measure," Dr. Erme says. Noting that STDs will probably always be with us, she says the health department is very focused on educating the community about the risks and prevention of such diseases.

Whether it's fighting a flu outbreak or the threat of bioterrorism, the department values approaching each challenge armed with a dose of common sense.

"People have to realize that we don't live in a sterile world—there's germs all around us," Dr. Erme says. "But we can take common sense measures to decrease the risk of contracting a disease. For example, hand washing is extremely important. It can't be emphasized enough that washing your hands can decrease the risk of getting more than 30 different diseases. It's a simple, cheap, effective method of hygiene." 



issues birth and death certificates."

To understand the health department's mission, says Partis, it's important to differentiate between public health and traditional health. "Public health is concerned with the health of the community, rather than the health of individuals," he explains. "In traditional medicine, the practitioners are more focused on treatment. Our major focus is prevention. And a key aspect of our mission is to ensure that every citizen of Akron has access to preventative health services."

Established in the late 1800s, the health



# This is A

**The Akron Zoo's** Prairie Dog Exhibit allowed the little critters to strut their stuff in front of (right photo) Susan Kane and Michael Letta.

Jeff Kile (father) with his triplets (left to right) Zachary, Lauren, and Madison, enjoy the Butterfly Maze at the Lehner Family Zoo Gardens, which opened in June. Gardens and a Gardener's Shed, along with water fountains and Nature's Classroom, are included in the improvements. It also features an indoor interactive area and animal exhibits.



**Akron celebrated Ohio's Bicentennial in June** with a concert by the Summit Choral Society directed by Dr. Frank Jacobs at E.J. Thomas Hall. The performance featured original music about Ohio — including a song using the names of all 88 counties as lyrics, composed by instructor Hal Walker and performed by the children's chorus.



**KEEP AKRON  
BEAUTIFUL**





# AKRON

Photos by Bruce Ford



**14-year-old Steven Kalail** (foreground) and **17-year-old Tierra Jones** have the honor of hitting the first tee shots at Mud Run Golf Course in Kenmore, near the Rolling Acres neighborhood. The course opened officially on June 17. Steven and Tierra are in The First Tee Akron program, which offered lessons in golf and life skills to more than 500 young men and women this summer.

Below, First Tee Director Vincent King congratulates founding president of Akron First Tee, Tom Knoll.



**When America went to war in Iraq in early April**, Mayor Plusquellic, his cabinet and chiefs of police and fire assembled in the Emergency Operations Center to receive live webcasts from officials at the Department of Homeland Security.



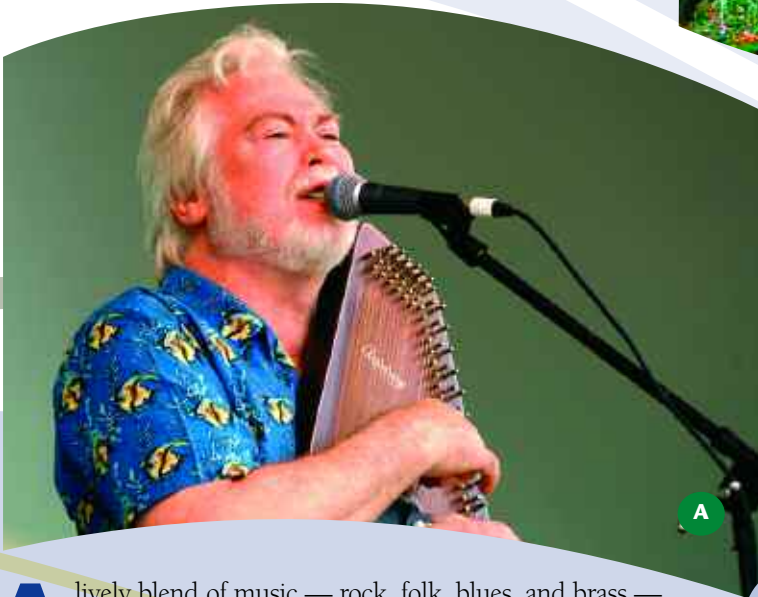
**The Aero Expo** flew into Akron Fulton International Airport June 21- 22, the third-largest air show in Ohio, attracting more than 35,000 spectators. Hosted by the Military Aviation Preservation Society Air Museum, the show included this vintage WWII B-17 (inset), A-10 Warthogs (below), the Goodyear Blimp and many other types of aircraft.





## News

# Art, Music & Lock 3



**A** lively blend of music — rock, folk, blues, and brass — kept downtown Akron's new First Energy Stage bursting with harmony this summer, after the city opened Lock 3 Park (see cover) to the public over the Memorial Day weekend.

The first season for the festival will end Labor Day weekend, August 29-31, with a "Canal Walk Weekend," featuring dance by Ohio Ballet and the mellow tunes of Richie Havens.

Attendance at Lock 3 averaged 2,000 people per weekend on



each of the summer's 14 weekends. Visitors enjoyed lunchtime music on Thursdays, concerts every Friday and Saturday evening, and "Homegrown Saturday Mornin'" — downtown's expanded farmers' market.

**(A)** The Lovin' Spoonful's Joe Butler led the 60's singers to proclaim "Summer In the City" and other favorites.

**(B,C)** Audiences got into the act, or relaxed with best friends **(D)** or took brush to sketch pad **(E)**.







(C)



(F)

(F) Kids of all ages get into the act by helping out jugglers on Saturday mornings.

(G) Straw hats and bagels are part of the Homegrown Saturday Mornin' scene.

(H) Cindy Davis and Laura Stackhouse of Davis Farm



(I)

(I) Allixon Conlon (in red) and Halle Bolender exercise "Clare B" while parents buy from the Great Harvest Bread Truck. Watching is John Rey.

(J) Bill Bakan of Maize Valley Farm Market in Hartville brings in flowers in baskets, bouquets, and herbs to Lock 3 on Saturdays.

(K) Kevin Delagrange entertained Saturday morning visitors to Lock 3.

(K)



(G)

(D)

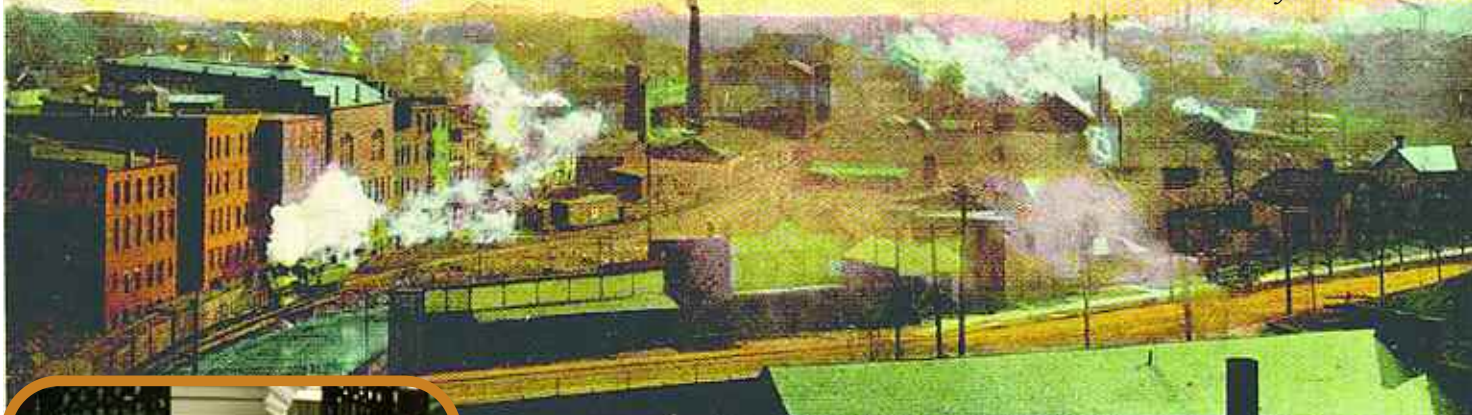




## History

# Reopened Venue Unlocks the Past

by Dave Lieberth




The area of Lock 3 Park, circa 1900. Looking south from Bowery Street, the photo was taken from atop the old Quaker Oats building, site of current Cascade 1 building.



Photo by Bruce Gates

Art apprentices Niki Michael of East High and Myles Adams of Central-Hower were the first official visitors to the exhibit "City of Invention," in the O'Neil's Commons area of Lock 3.

## Exhibiting Invention

"Akron: City of Invention," an exhibit devoted to the city's manufacturing history, will be open during Canal Walk Weekend at Lock 3 Park from 10 a.m. 5 p.m. August 29-31. The exhibit is a collaboration by the Summit County Historical Society, the Lighter Than Air Society, the University of Akron Archives, the Akron-Summit County Public Library, the Akron Toy Marble Museum, the Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor Coalition, TV Dinner Club; artists P.R. Miller and John Communale; and collector Brian Graham. The exhibit's curator is Guy Perneti of GMP Multimedia. 

**D**uring the winter of 2001, the City of Akron demolished a strip of buildings along South Main Street between the O'Neil's building and the Civic Theatre. It re-opened a view of the Lock 3 area of the Ohio-Erie canal—a view that had not been accessible in more than 100 years. This summer, the 4.5-acre area of vacant land became Lock 3 Park, the city's newest entertainment venue.

Excavation of the site in 2002 revealed thousands of small ceramic toys and pottery shards left over from two companies that put Akron on the map in the late 19th century as the center of manufacture of America's quality clay products.


Lock 3 Park today sits atop the site of the American Marble & Toy Manufacturing Co., whose founder Samuel C. Dyke was truly the founder of the American toy industry. While tin toys and ceramic dolls occupied the hands of well-to-do children

Excavation of the site in 2002 also revealed thousands of small ceramic toys and pottery shards left over from two companies that helped put Akron on the map in the late 19th century

in the 1880s, it was Dyke's vision that put a simple manufactured toy—a handful of ceramic marbles—in the hands of every child who had a penny.

"The company made 1 million marbles every day, six days a week—five boxcar loads every day," says Michael Cohill, president and curator of the American Toy Marble Museum, headquartered in Akron.

Nearby, on the site of what would become M. O'Neil Department Store, was Merrill Pottery. Later, it was combined into a business successor, Robinson Clay Product Co. E.H. Merrill Co., founded in 1833, manufactured most of the clay smoking pipes seen hanging from the lips of union soldiers in Mathew Brady's famous Civil War photographs. Merrill also produced ceramic beer bottles.

Akron's turn-of-the-century manufacturing legacy is remembered today at the Lock 3 History Exhibit in the O'Neil Commons. 



# Towpath is 'Staircase' of Discovery

By Russ Musarra / Illustration by Chuck Ayers

A woman walking her dog approached the north end of Lock 15 as artist Chuck Ayers sized up the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath scene for his illustration one evening this summer. It was so different from our first visit in 1990, when all that greeted us north of the lock was a wall of green. The forest had reclaimed the towpath in the years since the great flood of 1913.

Our guide 13 years ago was Cascade Locks Park Association founder Virginia Wojno-Forney, who spelled out the group's dreams for the Mustill Store and the mile-long "staircase" locks area, an appellation reflecting the grade, the steepest of the 309-mile canal.

The store and the adjoining Mustill house stood empty, but were miraculously intact, considering they were built between 1825 and 1850, when the canal and Akron were new. The resulting feature story, titled "Rediscovering the Towpath," appeared in

the *Akron Beacon Journal* on May 6, 1990. It helped shape our subsequent reports on the towpath's rebuilding.

The association's membership-appreciation night prompted Ayers' 2003 visit to Lock 15 and the restored Mustill Store. I couldn't be there, so I walked the trail later, safe in the knowledge that Ayers is as good a reporter as he is an artist.

Executive director Bridget Garvin's discussion of the association's projects and upcoming plans were a highlight of the evening, Ayers said. So I visited Garvin's office on the second floor of the Mustill Store, and before I headed north on the trail between Lock 15 and Memorial Parkway, I learned about:

**THE SEARCH** for the steel millwheel that is believed to be buried on the site of Ferdinand Schumacher's Cascade Mills on the south side of North Street. The association, working with the University of Akron Department of Classical Studies,

Anthropology and Archaeology in the dig this fall, hopes to develop the mill site as an interactive, educational visitor destination.

**PLANS** to preserve, interpret and celebrate the African-American history, cultural legacy, and jazz that once was centered on Howard Street within what is now the Cascade Locks Park. A committee formed last December 2002 to explore this project.

**DEVELOPMENT** of electronic archives at the Mustill Store. A grant from the Ohio Humanities Council is providing start-up costs. The archives, when operational, will be available to the public.

To learn more about these things, call Garvin at 330-374-5625, visit the association's website, [www.cascadelocks.org](http://www.cascadelocks.org), or drop in at the Mustill Store, 248 Ferndale Street. Hours are noon to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. And these could be expanded, Garvin said, if the association had more volunteers. ©





## Business

### Partner America

By Mark Williamson



These small business representatives are among 350 to attend Akron's Partner America Small Business Seminar at Tangier Restaurant.

Akron became an even better place for small business to do business thanks to "The Akron Initiative," which was unveiled by Mayor Plusquellic to a gathering of 400 small business owners in the spring, along with the presentation of the first checks. The Akron Initiative combines the resources of the city, the Small Business Administration, and four area banks, and will provide greater access to SBA capital for Akron entrepreneurs.

Business owners gathered at Tangier restaurant to hear the leader in turnaround services for small and mid-sized businesses, American Management Services, Inc. through "Partner America."

"We were pleased to be able to bring together such tremendous resources to aid and assist our small business community," said Mayor Don Plusquellic. "It is more important than ever today for us to offer support for small businesses. They remain the backbone of Akron's economy."

Mayor Plusquellic is the president-elect of the United States Conference of Mayors, which helped create the nation's first partnership of mayors, government agencies and private enterprise dedicated to small business growth and development, "Partner America."

Small businesses in Akron are already taking advantage of the support services available to them through this program, including management expertise, technical assistance, education, and access to finance and government procurement opportunities.

To find out more, visit their website at [www.partneramerica.com](http://www.partneramerica.com) or call the City of Akron Mayor's Office of Economic Development at 330-375-2133. ©

## Gold Medal Good Guy

### Olympian, city team up to help youngsters

By Robert Sberna



Olympian Butch Reynolds leading downtown workers on walk in early May. Left to right: Cynthia Caprez, municipal court; Frances Leiby, purchasing; Donna Urdiales, finance; Connie Mitchell, economic development; Kathie Jones, Brennan, Manna & Diamond law firm.

As an Olympic gold medalist, Butch Reynolds knew victory, holding the world record in the 400 meters from 1988 until 1999. Two years ago, he returned to his hometown to launch an after-school program he hopes to expand nationally.

Reynolds' after-school program is designed to provide constructive activities for boys who are fourth- and fifth-graders in the Akron Public School System. The program's objective is to instill life skills, goal-setting, and the importance of a positive attitude.

This past year, about 100 students participated in the program at several city schools.

Such a program is crucial, according to Reynolds. The after-school hours, he says,

are a time when children may experiment with smoking, drug abuse, and promiscuity.

Reynolds has also organized a summer youth program for Akron boys and girls ages 6 to 14. About 100 children are participating in the program, which meets from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Joy Park.

Both the after-school and summer youth programs are operated under the Harry "Butch" Reynolds Care for Kids Foundation.

The 38-year-old Reynolds, who attended Archbishop Hoban High School and The Ohio State University, says: "I've won a gold medal in the Olympics and I've seen the world

many times over. Now I'm going to give every ounce of energy back to the kids." ©

**This past year, about 100 students participated in the program at several city schools.**

**Such a program is crucial, according to Reynolds.**

**The after-school hours, he says, are a time when children may experiment with smoking, drug abuse, and promiscuity.**





# The Town Crier

by Russ Musarra

## A Southpaw to Watch

Youngstown State University pitcher **ERIC SHAFFER**, a 2003 graduate of Akron Garfield High School, enjoyed an outstanding freshman year on and off the field, reports his proud father, Bill, a staffer with Akron Public Works Engineering Services.

The highlight of the season was Eric's selection as Horizon League Pitcher of the Week in April.

Eric, who started eight games and had a 5.05 earned run average for the season, is pitching this summer for the Grand Lake Mariners in the Great Lakes Collegiate League. He has been playing since age 6 and honed his skills pitching for the Garfield Rams, whose coach, **BOBBY GRAHAM**, stressed academics as well as sports.

## Coda to a career



**DOROTHY JACKSON** (best known as Akron's deputy mayor for intergovernmental affairs, aka goodwill ambassador) retired June 30, saying she had no plans other than letting the

Lord lead her. She must be getting good guidance. Her phone has been busy every time the Town Crier has dialed.

I'm sure many of the calls concerned the big Aug. 28 retirement bash, which hadn't yet taken place at press time. Another date to circle: Nov. 9. That's when Dorothy turns 70.

## Employees of the Month

The Town Crier tips his hat to **LINDA SOLLBERGER**, **DAVID H. MARTINE**, and everyone on the **CITY OF AKRON SNOW**



**AND ICE REMOVAL CREWS** for their shared honor as employees of the month.

In April, **MAYOR DON PLUSQUELLIC** acknowledged the efforts of the snow and ice crews during the long and busy winter.

**MARTINE**, Akron Health Department sanitarian supervisor, was honored in May, capping nearly 35 years of service before his retirement at the end of that month. The Bowling Green State University graduate became a sanitarian supervisor in 1987. He is described as having demonstrated remarkable patience in the handling of difficult situations involving illegal dumping and nuisance and litter problems. Simply stated, he's the guy who oversaw removal of many scrap tire sites, helping to eliminate eyesores, mosquito-breeding sites, and potential health problems. Through his management of the mosquito-control program, Martine is credited with saving the city thousands of dollars over the years.



In the community, Martine was instrumental in the development of Safety Town in the Akron area. In 1978 he was Summit County's Safety Citizen of the Year. His memberships

have included many health and safety committees for the Akron Health Department,

the Ohio Environmental Health Association, National Safety Council, Akron Regional Development Board, and the Akron Jaycees.

Martine and his wife, Jo Ann, have a son, Scott, and a daughter, Traci. He's a member of the Men's Garden Club and enjoys fishing, golf, traveling, photography, and stained glass.



**SOLLBERGER**, June's employee of the month, is a management information systems specialist with the Akron Fire Division, where she began as a computer programmer analyst

in February 1991.

She has written several access databases to meet the major challenge of keeping and manipulating fire data in the ever-changing world of computer systems and has written reports used daily to supplement the Computer Aided Dispatch system. The University of Akron graduate is also considered an outstanding instructor.

Sollberger, who lives in North Hill with her cat Kelley, owns a boat, loves water skiing, and roots for the Cleveland Indians. She's a member of the Church of the Holy Spirit. ☪





# Akron City

## Farmers' Market

After searching the Farmers' Market for clues, an Akron police officer rounds up a prime suspect... for her garden!

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